

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Inland Great-winged Petrel as a prey item of the Peregrine Falcon - The Great-winged Petrel *Pterodroma macroptera* is a non-migratory seabird, nesting on islands along the south coast of Western Australia between Albany and Cape Arid (Serventy *et al.* 1971 *The Handbook of Australian Sea-birds*). It is commonly encountered at sea off the south coast and on the Great Australian Bight (Serventy and Whittell 1948 *A Handbook of the Birds of Western Australia*). Storm drifted birds have been found on the western beaches of the state as far north as Ningaloo in the Pilbara (Blakers *et al.* 1984 *The Atlas of Australian Birds*). In Western Australia, the Great-winged Petrel is more frequently recorded inland following gales than any other seabird (Serventy and Whittell 1948, Blakers *et al.* 1984).

On 11 September 1990, the remains of two Great-winged Petrels were located beneath the eyrie of a Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*, alongside remains of other birds including the Australian Magpie *Cracticus tibicen*, and Red Wattlebird *Anthochaera carunculata*. The eyrie was located on a rock face on the west side of Peak Charles, in Peak Charles National Park, some 105 km due north of the coast in the Esperance region.

Both specimens had been dead for some time, were dismembered and in a moderate state of decomposition. Measurements were taken as follows: wing 302 and 306 mm; tail 125 mm; culmen 34.1 mm; and tarsus 40 mm. These measurements are all in the lower range of measurements for the Western Australian population of the Great-winged Petrel (Serventy *et al.* 1971). This suggests that both individuals were immature birds. It was not possible to determine how long the birds had been dead.

During the falcon's breeding season, at inland haunts, the majority of prey is taken within a radius of sixteen kilometres from the eyrie, depending upon the food availability (Ratcliffe 1980 *The Peregrine Falcon*). Therefore it is likely that the Great-winged Petrel flew past Peak Charles at a distance of not more than 16 kilometres. Perhaps due to a weakened state resulting from being ferried inland by strong winds, depleted food reserves through the lack of feeding opportunities, and being present in a habitat distinctly different from its normal marine environment, individual Great-winged Petrels became easy prey targets for the Peregrine Falcons at Peak Charles. As far as the authors are aware, this is the first record of a seabird being taken by a Peregrine Falcon in inland Australia.

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